

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 (currently amended) A coating composition for making a microarray comprising:

microspheres dispersed in a fluid, the fluid containing a coating aid and a gelling agent ~~or a precursor to a gelling agent~~, wherein the gelling agent forms an immobilizing gel, wherein the gel includes a single layer of that is capable of immobilizing the microspheres in a random distribution such that the microspheres are evenly spread with a uniform density.

2 (previously presented) A coating composition according to claim 1 wherein the substrate is not premarked and does not contain microwells.

3 (currently amended) A coating composition according to claim 1 wherein the random ~~pattern on the substrate is preserved upon gelation of the gelling agent~~ distribution complies with a Poisson distribution.

4 (previously presented) A coating composition according to claim 1 wherein the microspheres are chemically functionalized to have surface active sites.

5 (previously presented) A coating composition according to claim 4 wherein the surface active sites carry organic or inorganic attachments.

6 (currently amended) A coating composition according to claim 4 wherein the surface active ~~site has~~ sites have organic or inorganic attachments thereon that are capable of chemical or physical interaction.

7 (currently amended) A coating composition according to claim 4 wherein the surface active ~~site is~~ sites are bioactive.

8 (currently amended) A coating composition according to claim 7 wherein each of the bioactive ~~site-interacts~~ sites interact with a nucleic acid, protein, or fragments thereof.

9 (currently amended) A coating composition according to claim 1 wherein each of the ~~microsphere~~-microspheres contains a signature.

10 (original) A coating composition according to claim 9 wherein the signature is comprised of an oil-soluble dye.

11 (original) A coating composition according to claim 9 wherein the signature is interrogatable by optical, magnetic, or other electromagnetic means.

12 (original) A coating composition according to claim 1 wherein the gelling agent is gelatin.

13 (original) A coating composition according to claim 1 wherein the gelling agent undergoes thermal gelation.

14 (original) A coating composition according to claim 12 wherein the gelatin is alkali pretreated gelatin.

15 (original) A coating composition according to claim 1 wherein the microspheres have a mean diameter between 1 and 50 microns.

16 (original) A coating composition according to claim 1 wherein the microspheres have a mean diameter between 3 and 30 microns.

17 (original) A coating composition according to claim 1 wherein the microspheres have a mean diameter between 5 and 20 microns.

18 (currently amended) A coating composition according to claim 1 wherein the microspheres ~~in the composition are capable of being immobilized on the substrate~~ are in a concentration between 100 and 1 million microspheres per centimeter squared.

19 (currently amended) A coating composition according to claim 1 wherein the microspheres ~~in the composition are capable of being immobilized on the substrate~~ are in a concentration between 1000 and 200,000 microspheres per centimeter squared.

20 (currently amended) A coating composition according to claim 1 wherein the microspheres ~~in the composition are capable of being immobilized on the substrate~~ are in a concentration between 10,000 and 100,000 microspheres per centimeter squared.

21 (original) A coating composition according to claim 1 wherein the microspheres comprise a synthetic or natural polymeric material.

22 (original) A coating composition according to claim 21 wherein the polymeric material is an amorphous polymer.

23 (original) A coating composition according to claim 22 wherein the amorphous polymer is polystyrene.

24 (currently amended) A coating composition according to claim 4 wherein at least one of the surface active ~~site~~ sites of each of the microspheres comprises a functionality independently selected from the group consisting of carboxy, amine, epoxy, hydrazine, aldehyde and combinations thereof.

25 (canceled)

26 (original) A coating composition according to claim 1 wherein the microspheres are prepared by emulsion polymerization or limited coalescence.

27 (currently amended) A microarray comprising:

a substrate coated with a composition comprising microspheres in a gel, wherein the gel is formed from gelation of a fluid containing~~dispersed in a fluid, the fluid containing~~ a coating aid and a gelling agent ~~or a precursor to a gelling agent~~, and wherein the microspheres are immobilized in a single layer at random positions on the substrate by the gel such that the microspheres are evenly spread with a uniform density on the substrate~~gelation of the gelling agent~~.

28 (original) A microarray according to claim 27 wherein the substrate is free of receptors designed to physically or chemically interact with the microspheres.

29 (cancelled)

30 (original) A microarray according to claim 27 wherein the gelling agent is gelatin.

31 (original) A microarray according to claim 27 wherein the microspheres bear chemically active sites.

32 (currently amended) A microarray according to claim ~~27~~ 31 wherein the chemically active ~~site is~~ sites are bioactive.

33 (original) A microarray according to claim 27 wherein the substrate comprises glass, plastic, cellulose acetate, or polyethyleneterephthalate.

34 (previously presented) A microarray according to claim 27 wherein the substrate is flexible.

35-40 (canceled)

41-42 (not entered)

43 (previously presented) A microarray according to claim 27 wherein the substrate is not premarked and does not contain microwells.

44 (currently amended) A method of making a microarray, comprising the steps of:

providing a substrate; and

coating on the substrate a composition ~~containing~~comprising microspheres in a gel, wherein the gel is formed from gelation of a fluid containing a coating aid and a gelling agent or precursor to a gelling agent;

wherein said composition is fluid during coating and the gelling agent undergoes thermal sol-to-gel transition and immobilizes the microspheres ~~become randomly immobilized in a single layer on the substrate such that the microspheres are evenly spread with a uniform density in the plane of the coating due to sol to gel transition of the gelling agent; and~~

~~wherein the substrate is characterized by an absence of specific sites designed to interact physically or chemically with the microspheres.~~

45 (previously presented) A method according to claim 44 wherein said sol-gel transition occurs without the coating undergoing a drying process.

46 (previously presented) A method according to claim 44 wherein the gelling agent is gelatin.

47 (cancelled)

48 (currently amended) A method according to claim 44 wherein the composition is coated on the substrate by using a method such as knife coating, blade coating, or slot coating.

49 (currently amended) A method of making a microarray, comprising the steps of:

providing a substrate;

coating on the substrate a composition according to claim 1,
wherein said composition is fluid during coating; and
allowing sol-to-gel transition of the gelling agent to randomly immobilize
the microspheres in a single layer in the plane of the coating such that the
microspheres are evenly spread with a uniform density.

50 (currently amended) A coating composition comprising
polymeric microspheres dispersed in a fluid, the fluid comprising a coating aid
and a gelling agent ~~or a precursor to a gelling agent, said fluid being capable of~~
~~sol-to-gel transition to a gel,~~ wherein the polymeric microspheres are ~~capable of~~
~~being~~ immobilized at random positions in a single layer in the gel upon when said
sol-to-gel transition of the gelling agent to a gel occurs.

51 (currently amended) A microarray comprising a substrate
coated with a single layer of randomly immobilized polymeric microspheres in a
gel, wherein the gel is formed by sol-to-gel transition of a fluid containing the
polymeric microspheres, a coating aid, and a gelling agent ~~or a precursor to a~~
~~gelling agent.~~